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SUBJECT: HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR LANZER URGES SHIFT FROM RELIEF TO RECOVERY IN DARFUR

11. (SBU) Summary: In a January 20 meeting with CDA, UN Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator Toby Lanzer urged that the international community start shifting its focus in Darfur from humanitarian relief to recovery efforts. Noting the decrease in overall violence in Darfur over the past several years, he asserted that development planning must commence immediately if a "peace dividend" from an eventual political settlement is to be realized. End Summary.

12. (SBU) On January 20, CDA met with Toby Lanzer, UN Deputy Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator for northern Sudan. Citing monthly statistics compiled by the African Union High Level Panel on Darfur (AUPD), Lanzer described the dramatic decrease in both the volume and volatility of fatalities there. While acknowledging that the security situation remains unpredictable, he argued that the international community ought to make use of these improved conditions to begin planning for development. "If and when a peace deal is reached, the people will look to the UN and international community for a peace dividend," he said. If the rewards of peace are to be quickly realized, planning must begin now, he added.

13. (SBU) When planning for recovery efforts in Darfur, Lanzer urged that the donor community work closely with Darfur's three state governments to better understand their capabilities and coordinate development efforts. Such engagement would dispel the Government of Sudan (GOS)'s notion that the international community is focused solely on humanitarian relief, he said, noting that "if we show the GOS some goodwill on the planning stages for recovery, I believe they will take it seriously." A commitment to development could leverage the GOS to take control of the security situation, commit funding and resources towards development, and decentralize power over regional and local issues, he said.

14. (SBU) One of the largest challenges to relief and recovery efforts in Darfur is the proliferation of its Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps, said Lanzer. Most camps are now "peri-urban" with electricity, water and sanitation, schools and jobs, giving little disincentive for IDPs to return to remote villages which have none of those services. "It's very difficult for me to envision more than one third of IDPs returning home," he said. "I'm afraid we created a generation of dependency that is unsustainable."

15. (SBU) In order to wean IDP residents from a lifetime of dependency, Lanzer listed a number of small steps to be taken without forcing the IDPs out of camps. Noting that over 70% of all

inflow to Darfur is food or food-related, Lanzer urged that the World Food Programme (WFP) change its profile: instead of continually providing handouts with no strings attached, he urged that WFP instead explore food for work programs, food plus vouchers that could be used on the local economy, or other such variations. The donor community cannot provide handouts forever, he said.

16. (SBU) Comment: While the security situation remains unpredictable, there is no doubt that violence in Darfur has abated significantly. Furthermore, the humanitarian disaster that many predicted following the March 2009 expulsion of thirteen of the largest INGOs failed to materialize, as Lanzer pointed out. As the world focuses attention on the tragedy unfolding in Haiti, where humanitarian aid is a matter of life and death, improvements on the ground in Darfur may permit gradual movement in the opposite direction, moving from humanitarian relief to early recovery efforts that may offer the best hope for transforming this beleaguered region. End Comment.

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